People & Events  
**Black Sunday (April 14, 1935)**   
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/peopleevents/images/3pixel_line.gif  
  
April 14, 1935, dawned clear across the plains. After weeks of dust storms, one near the end of March destroying five million acres of wheat, people grateful to see the sun went outside to do chores, go to church, or to picnic and sun themselves under the blue skies. In mid-afternoon, the temperature dropped and birds began chattering nervously. Suddenly a huge black cloud appeared on the horizon, approaching fast.  
  
Those on the road had to try to beat the storm home. Some, like Ed and Ada Phillips of Boise City, and their six-year-old daughter, had to stop on their way to seek shelter in an abandoned adobe hut. There they joined ten other people already huddled in the two-room ruin, sitting for four hours in the dark, fearing that they would be smothered. Cattle dealer Raymond Ellsaesser tells how he almost lost his wife when her car was shorted out by electricity and she decided to walk the three-quarters of a mile home. As her daughter ran ahead to get help, Ellsaesser's wife wandered off the road in the blinding dust. The moving headlights of her husband's truck, visible as he frantically drove back and forth along the road, eventually led her back  
  
The storm on Black Sunday was the last major dust storm of the year, and the damage it caused was not calculated for months. Coming on the heels of a stormy season, the April 14 storm hit as many others had, only harder. "The impact is like a shovelful of fine sand flung against the face," Avis D. Carlson wrote in a New Republic article. "People caught in their own yards grope for the doorstep. Cars come to a standstill, for no light in the world can penetrate that swirling murk. . . . The nightmare is deepest during the storms. But on the occasional bright day and the usual gray day we cannot shake from it. We live with the dust, eat it, sleep with it, watch it strip us of possessions and the hope of possessions. It is becoming Real. The poetic uplift of spring fades into a phantom of the storied past. The nightmare is becoming life."

References

The American Experience | Surviving the Dust Bowl | People & Events. (n.d.). In *PBS*. Retrieved July 12, 2009, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/dustbowl/peopleevents/pandeAMEX07.html